

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for a customer to anonymously purchase goods or services from an on-line merchant, said method comprising the steps of:

a customer depositing cash with a depository, the depository being independent of said customer such that the identity of said customer remains anonymous, the depository issuing to the customer a an anonymous, uniquely-generated serial number corresponding to the amount of cash deposited therewith; and

submitting the serial number to the on-line merchant to purchase goods or services, said on-line merchant and said depository being unable to identify said customer during said purchase.

2. (currently amended) A method for a customer to anonymously purchase goods or services from an on-line merchant, said method comprising the steps of:

a customer depositing an amount of monies with a seller, said seller informing a server of the amount of monies received from said customer, said customer, seller and server each being independent of each other such that the identity of said customer remains anonymous;

said server issuing to said customer a an anonymous, uniquely-generated serial number corresponding to the amount of monies deposited with seller; and

said customer submitting the serial number to a an on-line merchant to purchase goods or services.

3. (original) The method of claim 2, further including the step of said server, upon receipt of information from said seller of the amount of monies seller received from said customer, electronically transfers an amount of monies from an account of said seller to a second account.

4. (original) The method of claim 3, further including the step of said server electronically transfers an amount of monies from said second account to an account of said on-line merchant.

5. (original) The method of claim 2, further including the step of said on-line merchant, upon receipt of said serial number submitted by said customer, transmits said serial number to said server for authentication.

6. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein said amount of monies deposited with said seller is in the form of cash.

7. (original) A method according to claim 2, further including the step of providing a computer readable form having the serial numbers corresponding to the amount of funds deposited therewith disposed thereon.

8. (currently amended) A method for a customer to anonymously purchase goods or services from an on-line merchant, said method comprising the steps of:

a customer depositing an amount of monies with a seller, said seller informing a server of the amount of monies received from said customer;

said server issuing to said customer a an anonymous, uniquely-generated serial number corresponding to the amount of monies deposited with seller, said serial number comprising information about said customer's age; and

said customer submitting the serial number to an on-line merchant to purchase goods or services.

9. (currently amended) A method for a customer to anonymously purchase goods or services from an on-line merchant, said method comprising the steps of:

a customer depositing cash with a depository, the depository issuing to the customer a an anonymous, uniquely-generated serial number corresponding to the amount of cash deposited therewith, said serial number comprising information about said customer's age; and

submitting the serial number to the on-line merchant to purchase goods or services.